



ON MATTERS OF FAITH

— A Brief Explanation —

by

A Former Priest of the Antiochian Archdiocese



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“Christian” are members of the Church. We do not impart the Holy Mysteries to them because we do not have the same Faith.

We confess and proclaim with the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council: “We follow the ancient traditions of the catholic Church. We keep the institutions of the Fathers. We anathematize those who add anything to or subtract anything from the catholic Church.”

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A BRIEF EXPLANATION

By a Former Priest of the Antiochian Archdiocese

INTRODUCTION

Some have asked why I no longer serve as a priest and now have prayers in my home instead of attending a local parish. Although the answer is complex and not easily summarized, for those who want to know, I offer the following explanation.

ON BEING A PRIEST

After serving for over ten years as a priest in the Antiochian Archdiocese I now have lay prayers in my home under the guidance of my spiritual father and have been received into the Holy Orthodox Church in North America which is under the omophoron of Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston.

Through the years I came to understand that my ordination was not according to Orthodox standards and teachings. There were several issues that raised concerns in my mind, not the least of which was that the ordaining bishops had a reputation for preaching heresy publicly and in fact did so in his homily on the day of my ordination. This, along with my many concerns over the bishops' involvement in the World Council of Churches and its false ecumenism, led me to seek a bishop who holds the Orthodox faith without compromise and who refuses to be involved in the World Council of Churches and its ecumenism. Due to these and other personal issues, I concluded that I should no longer serve as a priest or remain under bishops who are compromising or betraying the Orthodox faith.

A SUMMARY OF THE ORTHODOX DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The Orthodox Church has always understood itself to be the true and correct Christian Faith and to be one and the same as the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church as confessed in the Creed. Furthermore, it has always held and confessed that the Grace

of the Holy Mysteries (Sacraments that are not merely empty forms) cannot be offered outside of the correct or Orthodox Faith. And it is the faithful holding of the Orthodox Faith that determines Canonicity.

Furthermore, the Church holds that the Grace of the Holy Spirit in each local community is derived from that community's connection with a bishop who holds the Orthodox or Apostolic Faith. A bishop cannot be a true bishop apart from holding the Apostolic Faith. Neither can a parish be a part of the Church apart from a true bishop. The Faith of the bishop is the Faith of the local parish. When the bishop is commemorated on the Holy Altar of a local community it means the Holy Eucharist is served in the name of and in the Faith of the bishop. If the bishop who is commemorated is not Orthodox, then neither is the local community, and the Eucharist and other Sacraments are there in form only.

This is why those who, for example, commemorate Roman bishops cannot be Orthodox even if, like the Byzantine Catholics, they have all the appearances of being Orthodox including the use of Orthodox vestments, the Byzantine Liturgy and even the Orthodox Creed. If the bishop they commemorate is in communion with the Pope of Rome they cannot be considered Orthodox and their Sacraments are but empty forms. Thus, the bishop must be Orthodox for the local community to be Orthodox and possess the Life-giving Mysteries.

The Bishops of World Orthodoxy Are Publicly Denying: 1) That the Orthodox Christian Faith Is the Only True and Correct One; and 2) That the Orthodox Christian Church Is the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; and 3) That It Is Necessary to Hold the Orthodox Faith In Order to Have the Grace of the Holy Mysteries.

I. The Orthodox Theology of the Church is Publicly Betrayed and Denied by Membership and Participation in the World Council of Churches.

have prayers with them, how much more is it forbidden to partake together with them in the Sacrifice.

Saint Symeon of Thessalonica (✠1429?)

PG 155:73

All the teachers of the Church, all the Councils, and all the Divine Scriptures, exhort us to flee those who uphold other doctrines and to separate from communion with them.

Saint Mark of Ephesus (✠1443)

Confession of Faith, XII, 304

If those in heresy remain in their religion, they must remain without Communion, for the one confession and the one Cup is for those who desire to be in communion with those who are of one faith with themselves, and not with others.

Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremias III (1716-1726; 1732-1733)

Canonical Decrees of the Ecumenical Patriarchs

Vol. 2, chap. 256



It is permitted to give the Immaculate Mysteries only to those in communion with the Church, according to the well-known patristic dictum: “My Mysteries belong to Me and to those that are Mine” (St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. 7 on 1st Corinthians*, 2; St. John of Damascus, *PG 96:9A*; St. Gregory Palamas, *Hom. 34:17*). Those in heresy — even those among them that are well-disposed toward us — are impeded from drawing nigh to the Holy Mysteries by their communion with heresy. Even though new calendarists and Ecumenists may be Orthodox in their hearts and love the Traditions of the Church, their ecclesiology is heretical: they accept to be in communion with heretical bishops, since they are of the opinion that this does not effect the salvation of their souls and that, further, the heterodox of the various denominations who bear the name

unto the dogs, saith the Lord, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest we become partakers in their dishonour and condemnation. For if union is in truth with Christ and with one another, we are assuredly voluntarily united also with all those who partake with us. For this union is effected voluntarily and not against our inclination. *For we are all one body because we partake of the one Bread*, as the divine Apostle says.

Saint John of Damascus (✠760)
Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book 4:13

With a great voice, Saint John Chrysostom declared that not only heretics, but also they who hold communion with them, are enemies of God.

Saint Theodore the Studite (✠826)
Letter to the Abbot Theophilus

Keep yourselves from soul-corrupting heresy, whose communion is alienation from Christ.

Saint Theodore the Studite
PG 99, 1216

Even if one should give away all his possessions in the world, and yet be in communion with heresy, he cannot be a friend of God but is rather an enemy.

Saint Theodore the Studite
PG 99, 1205

Concerning the Faith, the heretics were totally shipwrecked; but as for the others, even if in their thinking they did not founder, nonetheless, because of their communion with heresy, they too were destroyed with the others.

Saint Theodore the Studite
Letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem (PG 99, 1164)

From this the faithful can understand how much care they must have lest they give Communion to those that are excommunicated; this is especially true for our priests. For if they are not permitted to

The WCC, by its pronouncements and by its constitution, understands its various member bodies to all be parts of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and that they all possess true Christian Sacraments. This is essentially the “Branch Theory” of the Church that sees the various and divided bodies as equal and valid branches of the Church. The WCC understands that no one body or Church can claim for itself to be the true and correct one but that the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church will come to its full and true expression through the unity being forged by the WCC.

Thus, for the WCC, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church is not to be realized by a return to the Orthodox Faith but by an external unity of the various denominations (not necessarily an agreement in Faith), one of which is the Orthodox Church.

By virtue of membership in the WCC, each of the various bodies accepts and agrees with its constitution and its basic premises. Among these members are most of the Orthodox Churches that constitute world Orthodoxy.

For years we have been told that the Orthodox are there only to bear witness to the truth. If this is true, one wonders why the WCC never becomes more Orthodox while the Orthodox become more Protestant. If this is true, that we are there only to bear witness, why is it necessary to be full members who sign on to the constitution? Why not just be observers? If the mission of the Orthodox is only to “bear witness” why is it necessary for the Orthodox to serve on committees, hold offices and participate in conferences and efforts that all promote the theology of the WCC but not that of Orthodoxy. If the Orthodox mission is to bear witness, that witness is destroyed by Orthodox bishops and priests who betray the Orthodox theology of the Church by participation in joint prayers and worship with those whose theology contradicts the Orthodox Faith. A more realistic view of the Orthodox participation seems to be that the Orthodox Faith is betrayed and compromised while the false teachings of the various denominations are given a status of acceptance and validity by Orthodox participation.

There are some Orthodox who defend this participation saying, “We know where the Church is, we just don’t know where it is not.” This saying comes not from the Church Fathers, but from the Ecumenical movement itself and is an attempt to defend the Ecumenical “Branch Theory” of the Church. According to the Church Fathers we do know where the Church is not. The Fathers teach that the Church cannot exist where the Orthodox Faith is not held.

All of the preceding is more than enough to preclude any Orthodox participation in the WCC. But add to this the fact that the WCC and the NCC (*National Council of Churches*) have always sided with the Communists, the Marxist dictators and the revolutionary terrorists while portraying the United States as the villain and enemy. In addition, they tend to support political candidates whose views on abortion, homosexuality and other morality issues are contrary to the Orthodox Faith.

How can bishops hold the Orthodox Faith and at the same time hold membership in and participate in the WCC and NCC in such a way as to publicly betray the Orthodox theology of the Church and legitimize the various heresies of the various denominations?

II. *The Orthodox Theology of the Church is Publicly Betrayed and Denied by Relations With Roman Catholicism.*

Roman Catholicism does not hold the Orthodox Faith but rather holds a faith that in many ways contradicts the Orthodox Faith. Various Orthodox councils have condemned various Roman Catholic doctrines as heretical. Even though Rome has not renounced any of its un-Orthodox doctrine it has now been embraced by Orthodox patriarchs and bishops. First, the anathemas were lifted, which of itself is a betrayal of Orthodoxy. How can that which the Church once declared to be heresy, be no longer heresy? If someone under an anathema repents and renounces their heresy they are no longer under the anathema but the anathema against the false teaching remains. But Rome has not repented or renounced any

See, therefore, that you act according as the divine canons and the Councils of the Holy Fathers have approved, and do not impart the Divine Body of Christ to the unworthy, or to laypeople, unless they have converted to the Orthodox Faith. Woe unto those who impart the Mysteries to them! . . . If you keep this tradition, O priest, you shall save yourself and those whom you are about to teach.

St. Basil the Great (✠379), *Migne 3:1688c*

Another thing the blessed man (St. John the Almsgiver, Patriarch of Alexandria) taught and insisted upon with all was never on any occasion whatsoever to associate with heretics and above all, never to take Holy Communion with them, ‘even if’, the blessed man said, ‘you remain without Communion all your life, if through stress of circumstances you cannot find a community of the Catholic Church. For if, having legally married a wife of this world of the flesh, we are forbidden by God and by the laws to desert her and be united to another woman, even though we have to spend a long time separated from her in a distant country, and shall incur punishment if we violate our vows, how then shall we, who have been joined to God through the Orthodox Faith and the Catholic Church—as the Apostle says: ‘I espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ.’ (II Cor. 1.1:2)—how shall we escape from sharing in that punishment which in the world to come awaits heretics, if we defile the Orthodox and Holy Faith by adulterous communion with heretics?’

For “communion,” he said, “has been so-called because he who has ‘communion’ has things in common and agrees with those whom he has ‘communion.’ Therefore, I implore you earnestly, children, never to go near the oratories of the heretics in order to communicate there.

The Life of Saint John the Almsgiver (✠619)

With all our strength, therefore, let us beware lest we receive communion from or grant it to heretics; *Give not that which is holy*

aims to overthrow the entire Divine edifice that is called the Orthodox Christian Church and to erect in its place the New Tower of Babel. (Dr. Constantine Cavarnos from *Orthodox Tradition and Modernism*)

Editorial Note: The Synods of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (in 1975), the Moscow Patriarchate (in 1969) and the Syrian Patriarchate (in 2001) have officially and synodically resolved that it is allowable, under certain circumstances, to impart holy communion to the non-Orthodox.* This directly contravenes the patristic dictum: “If anyone be found sharing communion with excommunicated persons, let him also be excommunicated” (Antioch, Canon 2).

“THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED UNTO THE SAINTS” (Jude 3) INSTRUCTS US TODAY

And this food is called among us Εὐχαριστία [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these.

St. Justin (✠167) *First Apology*, Chap. 66

As the prayer goes forward, we ask and say, “Give us this day our daily bread.” And this may be understood both spiritually and literally, because either way of understanding it is rich in divine usefulness to our salvation. For Christ is the Bread of life; and this Bread does not belong to all men, but it is ours. And according as we say, “Our Father,” because He is the Father of those who understand and believe; so also we call it “our bread,” because Christ is the Bread of those who are in union with His Body.

St. Cyprian (✠258) *Treatise IV, On the Lord's Prayer*:18

* See <http://www.homb.org> for more information.

of its false teachings but has added more since the anathemas of the councils.

Yet, Orthodox hierarchs have declared the Pope to be the legitimate bishop of Rome and Roman Catholicism to be the “other lung” and “sister Church” of Orthodoxy. In some Orthodox Churches, Roman Catholics are allowed to commune. This is a clear recognition of their Baptism and their Priesthood. In the Antiochian jurisdiction of Great Britain, a priest's manual permits Orthodox Christians who are not near an Orthodox church to commune at a nearby Roman Catholic Church, thus acknowledging the Grace of Roman Catholic Sacraments. If all of this is permissible why did St. Mark of Ephesus have to suffer for his refusal to recognize Roman Catholicism as a part of the Church? If all of this is permissible, shouldn't St. Mark of Ephesus be condemned rather than honored?

In addition, Orthodox bishops and priests regularly participate in joint prayers and worship with the Pope and other Roman Catholics. In years past the Patriarch of Constantinople entered the name of the Pope in the diptychs, the official list of Orthodox bishops to be commemorated at the Eucharist. To my knowledge, this is still the case. Holy Cross Seminary just recently hired a Roman Catholic Jesuit to head up its Patristic department. All of these things indicate that world Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism are *de facto in communion* with one another in a way that has escaped the detection of most.

To my knowledge none of these betrayals of the Orthodox theology of the Church have been denounced or condemned by any of the bishops of world Orthodoxy. To the contrary, those who do these things continue to be recognized as faithful bishops and priests.

III. The Orthodox Theology of the Church is Betrayed by Relations With Non-Christian Religions.

Orthodox betrayals have gone far beyond participation in the WCC and relations with Roman Catholicism to include participa-

tion in the *World Parliament of Religions*. The WPR is an organization that was spearheaded by Rome which aims at creating unity among all the religions of the world, including Buddhists, Muslims, Taoists, Zoroastrians, various New Age Religions, pagan Spiritualists and many others.

Orthodox bishops have participated (marched in the processions and sat as observers) in these gatherings where prayers and incense were offered to various pagan gods. One such gathering was held in a Roman Catholic Church in Assisi, Italy where a statue of Buddha was placed on the altar and prayers and incense were offered by Buddhist monks. In another service the Gospel Book was carried down the aisle in a procession by aboriginal animists dressed in jungle type loincloths and war paint while chanting to their gods.

The martyrs gave their lives rather than to acknowledge or participate in pagan worship. They called the pagan gods demons. And now the bishops of world Orthodoxy march in procession and sit idly by as though in approval of these things.

We have heard Orthodox patriarchs praising Buddhism and Islam. We have heard one Patriarch say that the adherents of Islam and Christianity worship the same God and that anyone who speaks against Islam speaks against God. We recently read that the current Ecumenical Patriarch has blessed and encouraged the use of Muslim sponsors in Orthodox baptisms. The bishops of world Orthodoxy have condemned none of these betrayals but rather those who commit them are honored.

How can bishops who participate in such gatherings that deny Christ as the only Savior of mankind and betray the Faith of the Martyrs still be Orthodox? Yet, all remain in communion with one another and call themselves Canonical while condemning and excommunicating those who try to be faithful to the canons as extremists, radicals, fundamentalists and non-canonical.

IV. *The Orthodox Theology of the Church is Betrayed by a False and Roman Catholic View of What it Means to be Canonical.*

ones who were in heresy. When the Sixth Ecumenical Council was finally convened, among those condemned for heresy were four Patriarchs of Constantinople, one Pope of Rome, one Patriarch of Alexandria, two Patriarchs of Antioch, and a multitude of other Metropolitans, Archbishops and Bishops. During all those years, that one simple monk was right, and all those notable bishops were wrong. (From the Epilogue of The Life of Our Holy Father Maximus the Confessor)

The disease from which new-calendarists [world Orthodoxy] are suffering is the worst heresy that the Church ever faced. It is a condition that one can label with many names: ecumenism, syncretism, agnosticism, religious indifference, secularism. The toxin that has poisoned them is the spirit of this world. Some of the symptoms of their disease: their celebrating feasts with the heretical denominations of the West [rather than with the Orthodox according to the Orthodox calendar], their anti-monastic spirit, their refusal to recognize the authority of the Church Fathers (whose authority is masterfully being torpedoed in their theological schools), the social gospel, the secular mode of attire of the clergy, the official concord with the preaching and works of Athenagoras, Demetrius, and the essential acceptance of them by all, the dissemination of the ecumenistic message and its extension to a pan-religious level. Such actions are synodically being committed, as well as by individual bishops, and are tolerated by the rest. (The Touchstone)

Concerning the Holy Canons disregarded by Athenagoras and other Orthodox ecumenists, let me quote the 45th and the 65th Apostolic Canons. The 45th says: "Let a bishop, presbyter, or deacon who only joins in prayer with heretics be suspended; if he permits them to function as clergy, let him be deposed." The 65th says: "If any clergyman or layman, enter a synagogue of Jews, or of heretics, to pray, let him be both deposed and excommunicated." Yet Athenagoras and his fellow Orthodox ecumenists have paid no attention to them. (Dr. Constantine Cavernos from Orthodox Ecumenism as a Divisive Force)

Ecumenism is obviously not simply an innovation, but is a dreadful hodgepodge of innovations and heresies, a frightful syncretism which

priests who have fallen and submitted to the Latins; neither assemble in church with them, nor receive any blessing from their hands. For it is better for you to pray to God in your homes alone than to gather together in churches with the Latin-minded. (Germanos II, Patriarch of Constantinople)

He that saith not "Anathema" to those in heresy, let him be anathema. (Seventh Ecumenical Council)

Is the shepherd a heretic? Then he is a wolf! You must flee from him; do not be deceived to approach him even if he appears gentle and tame. Flee from communion and conversation with him even as you would flee from a poisonous snake. (Saint Photius the Great)

I am convinced that the further I depart from him [the Patriarch] and from those like him [the Latin-minded], the closer do I draw near to God and all the faithful and the holy Fathers; and the more I am separated from them, by so much more am I united to the truth and the holy Fathers. (Saint Mark of Ephesus)

Better is a praiseworthy war than a peace that separates us from God. (Saint Gregory the Theologian)

Even if one should give away all his possessions in the world, and yet be in communion with heresy, he cannot be a friend of God, but is rather an enemy. (Saint Theodore the Studite)

As in a body, a neglect of wounds generates fever, infection and death; so in the soul, slight evils overlooked open the door to graver ones. But if a proper rebuke had at first been given to those who attempted to depart from the divine sayings and change some small matter, such a pestilence would not have been generated, nor such a storm have seized upon the Church; for he that overturns even that which is minor in the sound Faith, will cause ruin in all. (Saint John Chrysostom)

As history has demonstrated. Saint Maximus, who was only a simple monk and not even ordained, and his two disciples were the ones who were Orthodox, and all those illustrious, famous and influential Patriarchs and Metropolitans against whom the Saint had written were the

Many today fear any form of Orthodoxy that is not in communion with Constantinople or SCOBA. Some seem to think that being canonical merely means being part of the structure or jurisdictions of world Orthodoxy. Validity is based primarily on a legal sort of membership or recognition with everything deriving from the Ecumenical Patriarch as a kind of "Orthodox Pope". This is a very Roman Catholic point of view. From this perspective being canonical doesn't have as much to do with the keeping of the canons as with maintaining an external relationship with a certain group. They contend it is necessary to remain in communion with world Orthodoxy in order to be canonical. This, in spite of the contrary teachings of St. Paul, St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Mark of Ephesus and numerous other Saints and Fathers who taught that we should flee from false teachers even if they cloak themselves in Orthodox garments. If communion with Constantinople and world Orthodoxy is necessary to be canonical then St. Maximus, St. Mark of Ephesus and many others commemorated by the Church were not canonical.

The reason the Church teaches us to flee from false teachers is because we cannot be saved apart from Truth, and the Grace of the Holy Mysteries cannot exist outside of the Truth of the Church. The Church is not membership in a particular organization but in the Body of Christ. The unity of the Church is not created by SCOBA or Constantinople but by the Holy Spirit among those who hold the Faith of Christ, which is the Faith of the Church.

There are no canons that require communion with SCOBA or Constantinople or any other jurisdiction that betrays the Faith, but all the canons, for the sake of our salvation, teach us to flee from false teachers and false bishops and to continue steadfast in the Faith once and for all delivered to the Saints.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. CANONS. COUNCILS AND FATHERS ON FAITHFULNESS TO THE APOSTOLIC FAITH AND HOW WE MUST FLEE FROM FALSE TEACHERS

Romans 16:17 — *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which we have learned and avoid them.*

II John 9-11: *Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deed.* (Compare this with a statement by an Orthodox bishop urging us to regard pagan idols as sacred; compare to bishops having joint worship and joint discussions with other groups including Muslim, Jews, etc.; compare with those who say Jews, Muslims and Christians all worship the same Father God; compare with the bishop who said that anyone who speaks against other religions is opposed to God).

Titus 1: 7-14: *A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God... holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers...wherefore rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith; not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.*

II Thessalonians 3:6: *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not according to the tradition which he received from us.*

All the teachers of the Church, all the Councils, and all the Divine Scriptures, exhort us to flee those who uphold other doctrines and to separate from communion with them. (St. Mark of Ephesus)

With a great voice, Saint John Chrysostom declared that not only heretics, but also they who hold communion with them are enemies of God. (Saint Theodore the Studite)

But as for those who on account of some heresy condemned by the Holy Councils or Fathers, sever themselves from communion with their president (bishop), that is, because he publicly preaches heresy and with bared head teaches it in the Church, such persons as these not only are not subject to canonical penalty for walling themselves off from communion with the so-called Bishop before synodal clarification, but [on the contrary] they shall be deemed worthy of due honor among the Orthodox. For not Bishops, but false bishops and false teachers have they condemned, and they have not fragmented the Church's unity with schism, but from schism and divisions have they earnestly sought to deliver the Church. (Fifteenth Canon of the First-Second Council of Constantinople)

Concerning the Faith, the heretics were totally shipwrecked; but as for others, even if in their thinking they did not founder, nonetheless, because of their communion with heresy, they too were destroyed with the others. (Letter to the Patriarch of Jerusalem by St. Theodore the Studite)

You told me that you feared to tell your presbyter not to commemorate the heresiarch; I will not presume to say anything about this to you for the present, except that the communion is defiled simply by commemorating him, even if he who is commemorating is Orthodox. (St. Theodore the Studite)

When Saint Hypatius understood what opinions Nestorius held, immediately, in the Church of the Apostles, he erased his name from the diptychs, so that it should no longer be pronounced at the Oblation. [This was before "Nestorius' condemnation by the Third Ecumenical Council.]

We forbid all the clergy who adhere to the Orthodox and Ecumenical Council in any way to submit to the bishops who have already apostatized or shall hereafter apostatize. (Third Canon, Third Ecumenical Council)

I adjure all the people in Cyprus who are true children of the Catholic Church to flee as fast as their feet can carry them from those